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TO THE

WHOLE WHIG PARTY OF THE UNITED STATES.

John Minor Botts.

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A short time since it was my pleasure, because I felt it to be my duty, to publish an address to the Whigs of Virginia, upon the subjects connected with the late Whig State Convention, in which I undertook to show, first, that the preference, as expressed by that body, for General Taylor as President, did not conform to the sentiment of the Whig party, and also to show the means by which that expression of preference was obtained; secondly, that Mr. Clay was a more available candidate than any other that could be nominated; and, thirdly, that General Taylor (for whom, as a man and a soldier, I entertain a high respect and admiration) did not occupy *a political position* that would justify the Whig party in selecting him as the exponent of their party doctrines, and as the advocate and supporter of those principles which alone constitute the difference between ourselves and our opponents; for, if it is not *the adoption of the principles* of a party which constitute a man a member of that party, then I have lived to little advantage for five-and-forty years—as, from the time I first entered into political life up to the present moment, I have entertained the belief, now for the first time disputed, that it was *that* alone that made me a Whig and another a Democrat. But it seems I have been mistaken; and for one to say “*I am a Whig*,” is all-sufficient to establish his claims to orthodoxy, and entitle him to occupy the highest seat in the synagogue. All this may be so, but to my untutored and unsophisticated mind it has appeared that one might as well expect to enter the portals of heaven by declaring, “I am a Christian, although I do not recognise any obligations to the Almighty, *or adopt his precepts* as the rule of my action,” as to claim the Presidency at the hands of the Whigs, by saying, “I am a Whig; but you must take me on your own responsibility, as I will make no pledges, and will not be the exponent of your party doctrines, nor look to your principles as the rule of my action.” It was this consideration, combined with the belief that, if we did so, it would be the means of destroying the party to whose principles I have devoted the largest and most valuable portion of an active life, that prompted me to address the Whigs of Virginia.

When I penned that article, I was not insensible to the great odds and prejudices I had to encounter. I was not unmindful that I was arraying myself against the entire delegation in Congress from my own State, the Legislature of Virginia, the Whig State Convention, and the entire Whig press of my own district, (and, with one or two exceptions, of the whole State,) and that I was assuming a position which I presume no man, not besotted with vanity and self-importance, would from taste or preference, or *without necessity*, choose to occupy. I confess I see nothing in it very enviable to a public man, and it would require a very strong conviction of duty to force me into it. But, when convinced, if the odds had been ten times greater, I could not have been deterred from placing myself in open opposition to it. It is enough, I know, to crush any man who has not truth and justice for his shield. Upon these I

rely; and time, perhaps, will vindicate the correctness of my judgment; but, if adverse circumstances should arise to prevent it, and I should fall in an honest effort to discharge a solemn duty, I shall meet my fate with a more reconciled conscience than many of those who will have triumphed over me, by their tergiversations and unreal professions of devotion to a cause, that in their souls they desire to overthrow. It is not the first battle I have had to fight, single-handed and alone, against friend and foe, until the people came to the rescue, and forced the politicians to take the same course. I have not forgotten the scenes of 1841; they are about to be re-enacted.

When I presented my views in the address referred to, I had hoped there would be no farther occasion, for the present at least, that I should have more to say. But four of my colleagues—to wit, Mr. Pendleton, Mr. Preston, Mr. Fulton, and Mr. Flournoy—have published a pamphlet, *intended* as an answer to mine, which, in regard to some of its facts and deductions, I purpose briefly, and very briefly, to notice. There is an ill-concealed vein, or attempt at irony, lurking through the piece, which I shall pass without observation, only for the reason that I feel that I am as far above its reach, as the attempt itself is unworthy of consideration. I seek no controversy with these gentlemen, or any others; I have indulged in no acrimonious remarks in reference to any individual; I have sought to disparage no one; I made no personal allusion to any one of the four except to Mr. Preston, and then in terms of respect and kindness; nor would they, if strength of argument had availed them, have been disposed to use so impotent an instrument against me, even under cover and disguise. Argument failing, a feeble effort at disparagement is adopted. Be it so. Let their tastes be gratified. I have a higher object to accomplish than to suffer this question to degenerate into a personal controversy—to see who can pen the sharpest and most pungent paragraph. I yield, without a sacrifice of vanity or pride, to the chivalric four.

The self-satisfaction and amiable complacency with which they look upon their own handiwork, and view their own position, is amusing! Having accomplished all they sought—to wit, *the overthrow of Mr. Clay* in Virginia—they cannot tolerate the idea that their triumph is to be disturbed by any manner of complaint from those who have been wronged; we must not appeal to those most interested, to repair that wrong, from an apprehension that an ill gained victory may be snatched from their grasp, even in the hour of rejoicing. It is more than intimated that it was an “unjustifiable arrogance” in me to complain of the proceedings of the convention, or to address myself “to the Whigs of Virginia;” and now I take a wider field, and address myself to the whole Whig party of the United States. Perhaps these honorable gentlemen may be better reconciled to my familiarity and freedom with the Whigs of Virginia, when I tell them, that I never shouted pæans to Jacksonism—that I never slid off from Jacksonism to Calhounism, nor from Calhounism to Conservatism, nor from Conservatism to Whigism, and will not now slide off from Whigism into “*No-partyism*,” and that my purpose is to keep united and indissoluble the Whig party, and not to break it up. I have been a Whig from the beginning, and a Whig all the time; and a Whig, true, genuine, and unadulterated, I mean to live and die; it is by my principles, and not “by the decision of Virginia, through good or evil, that I mean to stand or fall;” otherwise I should have been a Jackson man in 1828, again in ’32; a Van Buren man in ’36, again in ’40; a Polk man in ’44, and the man of some other Democrat in ’48; but, as my attachment to majorities may be less than theirs, it may account for the difference between us. I have only to add here, that if there should ever be another convention held in Virginia for the purpose of ascertaining public sentiment, it is hoped that each county will send their delegates



from among its own citizens, who know their views, and will represent them truly; for, so far from its being true, as represented in their pamphlet before me, that the convention was composed of "650 delegates, coming fresh from almost every county and precinct, appointed just at the moment of action," there were nine counties represented by one gentleman each, many by two only, and in very many other instances, as in some of those already mentioned, by members of the Legislature, or citizens of Richmond, who had never set foot upon the soil, and in all probability scarcely knew a man by sight or by name in the counties they were representing; and there was one gentleman appointed a delegate from twelve counties, and therefore gave twelve votes, and by possibility may have decided twelve counties; while very many of them represented three, four, five, and six counties, and thus represented their own views without a knowledge of the views of those they represented; and this is called an expression of public sentiment.

My colleagues say, "We know of no State in this Union, the chance of carrying which is absolutely desperate, unless the party adopts the *wise* policy of placing the contest on *obsolete issues*, or prefers to stake its fortunes on the availability of '*obsolete candidates*.'" If this is not an abandonment, clear, open, and undisguised, of the principles of the Whig party, if they have not gone upon the platform Mr. Cost Johnson has erected, then I know not what it means.

What are the principles of the Whig party? The currency, and protection to American industry, *of the old issues*, are the most prominent and important. How have these old issues become obsolete? Have they become so by *their* adoption of the principles of the other party now in power, the truth, the wisdom, the justice, and practical working of which have, in their view, proved satisfactory and beneficial to the country? If so, why don't these gentlemen openly avow themselves in favor of free trade and the Sub-treasury? Then their influence with the Whig party would cease to operate. How else can they have become obsolete? If the measures now in force are unwise, impracticable, and injurious to the public interests, then *the old issues are not obsolete*; they must be renewed whenever we have the power to enforce them: and if they have grown *out of use*, because of the established virtue and wisdom of the measures *now in use*, and I believed it, I would consider myself as much a Locofoco as a Whig, and a little more so; because I would not adhere to any party whose principles I believe antagonistic to the public welfare.

And how has Mr. Clay become an obsolete—(not an unavailable) but an "*obsolete candidate*," except that his principles have been abandoned? And if this is the condition of the Whig party in Virginia, the sooner we know it the better. These declarations will occasion no little surprise with the constituents of some of the signers of that pamphlet, and I apprehend they will find it so. Then, if the old issues *are* obsolete, there is but one question at issue between the two parties, and that is the war question; and upon this point I will, before I close this communication, show that there is no choice between Mr. Polk and General Taylor; a beautiful condition of things, to which the Whig party is to be reduced by the *Locofoco State of Virginia*, and the disaffected members of the Whig party of that State, who think it more important that Virginia should be in the majority than that old Whig principles and old Whig champions should be successful.

Under the head of "The effects of Lightning," in the pamphlet before me, a different version is given to that which I gave, materially varying the question, and one altogether erroneous, as I conceive, and as I will establish. It is said—

"In the first place, we deny that there was any mistake or misstatement in announcing the news from Kentucky.

"Secondly, if there was any in regard to North Carolina it was of an accidental and immaterial character, and that even to that extent it rests on conflicting and uncertain recollections.

"And that, thirdly, and much more importantly, it did not influence the 'judgment and decision' of the convention.

"We disclaim all purpose to impute to Mr. BORTS intentional misstatement or misrepresentation of the facts, but we deny the literal accuracy of his report.

"At the close of Mr. Preston's speech on Friday evening, Mr. Archer, the president of the convention, handed him a letter, which he had received whilst Mr. P. was speaking. After rapidly running over the letter, Mr. Preston said, 'the telegraph has arrived; Kentucky has nominated General Taylor.' Mr. BORTS here rose from his seat, and, addressing himself to Mr. Preston, said, '*that was the Taylor convention.*' Mr. Preston replied 'yes,' 'but the other convention appointed out and out Taylor men, and both conventions appointed the same delegates.'

"The telegraphic despatch above referred to was from one of the members of Congress from Kentucky, and a gentleman of the highest respectability; and there could be no reason to doubt its accuracy. Nobody has doubted its accuracy; it was the announcement based upon it that was objected to. His despatch was in the following words.

"HON. WILLIAM B. PRESTON:

"DEAR SIR: The Kentucky Whig convention, for presenting candidates for Governor, &c., simply appointed delegates *avowed* Taylor men. The Taylor convention, same day, nominated Taylor, and appointed the *same delegates*.

"Now, it will be seen that there is not the slightest discrepancy between the announcement as made and the despatch itself, unless it be in the words '*out and out*' in place of the word '*avowed*.' We cannot, ourselves, perceive the importance of the variation."

Let us take the three propositions here laid down in regular order. First, "We deny that there was any mistake or misstatement in announcing the news from Kentucky."

Now let us see what the despatch contained, and what was the announcement which these gentlemen so confidently assert strictly corresponded the one with the other.

The despatch says, "The Kentucky Whig convention, for presenting candidates for Governor, &c., *simply* (mark that word) appointed delegates *avowed* Taylor men."

The announcement, according to their own shewing, was, "The telegraph has arrived; Kentucky has *nominated* General Taylor." As for the paragraph above quoted, about my interruption, &c., that will be disposed of presently.

Now, I do not mean to raise any question of veracity with these gentlemen, because I do not suspect them of being capable of telling an untruth, in the first place; and, secondly, because it would be both idle and ridiculous to do so, upon a subject to which there were from two to three thousand witnesses; but I do mean to raise a question of *fact*, of *recollection*, and *deduction*. What credit can be attached to their deductions when they themselves publish the announcement as above, in juxtaposition with the lightning despatch, and deny that there was any mistake or misstatement in the announcement; they *admit* that Mr. Preston said, "Kentucky has *nominated* General Taylor;" they *shew* that they were *authorized only* to say that Kentucky had "*simply*" appointed delegates. As for what the Taylor convention did it was of no moment, for they of course would nominate him, being assembled for that purpose only.

Let me recall the circumstances. They expected a despatch would arrive announcing a nomination, I had predicted it would not come; an honorable member of the House of Representatives from Kentucky, from whom their impressions had been chiefly derived, announces to them (*as if to correct an erroneous impression he had created*), THEY HAVE "*SIMPLY*" APPOINTED DELEGATES. Now let me ask, for what purpose could such a despatch have been presented to the convention? We had appointed our delegates. We asked them to stop there, not to trammel them with instructions by a resolution of preference, and predicted that this was what Kentucky would do; then why



was the telegraphic despatch introduced, if it was only to announce that Kentucky simply appointed delegates? Why was not the telegraphic despatch itself read; and, if it had been, would not the effect have been precisely opposite to that which was produced? Was the announcement made to operate in favor of my prediction and my views, or was it to overthrow them, and to sustain their own? If it had been so announced, would it not have sustained my position? Was it so intended? Did any one member of that convention so understand it? If so, why that shout upon shout, and yell upon yell, that followed? Why the declaration, from many quarters, that the question of availability was settled? These facts, I apprehend, will speak for themselves, in the absence of all other testimony; but if any such interruption on my part occurred, I must, in honor and sincerity, declare my entire and total ignorance of it, or any thing like it. I have not seen one man yet who was in that convention, except these four gentlemen, and one other, who did not leave it under the impression, that when Mr. Preston said "both conventions had nominated Old Zac," he meant both Whig and Locofoco conventions; which was confirmed by the declaration that immediately followed, "and now my lips are unsealed; I may say, what I would not have said two hours ago, but what I have long known, that only three members of the Kentucky legislature were opposed to him." I feel very confident that, at that time, I had never heard of a Taylor convention being held in Kentucky. This is my recollection on the subject; and having so expressed myself to Mr. McFarland next day, when I had read the despatch itself, which contained the first intimation I had of a Taylor convention, I am confirmed in its truth. He, as I recollect, was under the same impression, and it is impossible that either of us, or any other, could have been, if such conversation had passed. I have observed that a similar statement, word for word I believe, appeared in the Whig of the 20th. I should like to know if that article was written by the editors, and if they heard me make any such statement, or whether that statement was furnished to them by others.

Such an explanation of the announcement, as these gentlemen were present, could not have been received otherwise than as a concession to the correctness of my position, and as overthrowing their own; and, upon a review of their own production, they must become satisfied of their present mistake. The telegraphic despatch, as received and now published by them, certainly fortified my position; for I said Kentucky would simply appoint delegates; the despatch says they did "simply" appoint delegates; and yet the nomination was announced and received with greater demonstrations of triumph, on the part of General Taylor's friends, than I recollect ever to have witnessed in any public assembly of the same size. These facts are stronger than the fleeting recollections of frail humanity.

I have twenty letters and statements, in writing, all going to prove the literal correctness of my first statement. I will furnish the following only, as they *only* were intended by the writers (as far as I know) for publication. The difficulty of obtaining the views of gentlemen scattered over the State is apparent, and therefore I have not sought them; but the impressions of many of the citizens of Richmond, who were present as spectators, are before me, and they could be multiplied to any extent, if it were now deemed, or should hereafter become, necessary. The following is a letter from Mr. John Armistead Carter, and a note appended by Major Wooldridge, both of whom happened to be in Washington when the Whig of the 20th reached this city. I have seen very few members of the convention since, but not one that did not entirely concur with these gentlemen:

"WASHINGTON.

"MY DEAR SIR: I have just seen, in the Richmond Whig of the 20th of March, what purports to be a correction of your statement of the occurrences which took place in the late Virginia Whig convention. I think it proper to state that, before seeing the Whig of the 20th, I had read your statement, and did not doubt but that it would be concurred in by every member of the convention. It certainly contains, to the letter, a correct statement of facts, so far as my memory goes. The article in the Whig says: 'According to the concurring recollection of gentlemen to whom we have referred, the following was as nearly as it is possible to remember the precise language used: Mr. Preston said, the telegraph has arrived; Kentucky has nominated Gen. Taylor. Mr. Botts here interposed and said, that was the Taylor Convention. Yes, replied Mr. Preston, but the other convention appointed the same delegates.' I sat very near Mr. Preston, as one of the vice presidents of the body, and thus had a good opportunity of hearing what was said. I did not hear you make any such remark to Mr. Preston as the one stated above, viz: 'That was the Taylor convention.' And I think if gentlemen will recollect the shout upon shout which immediately followed Mr. Preston's proclamation, that Kentucky had nominated Gen. Taylor, they will see at once that such conversation could not have taken place at that time. Believing that all parties wish to arrive at the facts as they occurred, I have no objection to your making any use of this statement you may think proper.

Yours, very respectfully,

JOHN A. CARTER."

"Hon. J. M. BORRS."

"I was a member of the Whig convention referred to, and have read Mr. Botts' address, and I am of opinion that the account he gives of what Mr. Preston said, as reported by the telegraph, is correct. A. S. WOOLDRIDGE."

But the second proposition is equally strange, to wit:

Secondly. If there was any (mistake or misstatement) in regard to North Carolina, it was of an accidental and immaterial character, and that, even to that extent, it rests on conflicting and uncertain recollections.

My language was, that Mr. Preston said: "And another telegraphic despatch has arrived; North Carolina, too, has nominated old Zac;" while the despatch, from an unknown and irresponsible quarter, stated that a decided majority of the convention were in favor of Gen. Taylor for the next Presidency, and *that* a mere opinion, an expression of the belief only of the writer, as the fact turned out to be entirely different, as will appear by the extract below of a letter from a most distinguished member of that body, and formerly a distinguished member of Congress,\* and this is said to have been, *if an error at all*, (God save the mark,) of an accidental and immaterial character. As for the accidental part of it, I am willing to concede it; but, as to its immateriality, I must take leave to differ with the honorable gentlemen, and say, that this is not the way in which I either measure or weigh the meaning of words; nor will they find any one, I apprehend, to agree with them as to the materiality of the mistake or misstatement. But it "rests on conflicting and uncertain recollections." What evidence there is of conflicting or uncertain recollection in the matter, is left for each one to conjecture for himself. It is not furnished. The testimony of the Richmond Whig is certainly against them when it says, *we* thought Mr. Preston stated it too broadly.

But, thirdly, and much more importantly, it did not influence the "judgment and decision" of the convention. This is a bare expression of their opinion

\* "RALEIGH, February 25, 1848.

My honest and candid opinion is, that at least two-thirds, and I really believe three-fourths, of the members would have voted a resolution expressing a preference for Mr. Clay as President. I made it a point to endeavor to ascertain the sense of men here in regard to this matter, and I not only found a general unwillingness to support Gen. Taylor in his present position, but I heard many declare that they would not vote for him, even if nominated by the convention, unless he more thoroughly identified himself with the Whig party. I doubt not different accounts will be written to W., I dare say, honestly; but, you may rely on it, the feelings of this convention, and, as far as I have been able to judge, of the people of the State generally, are utterly adverse to taking up Gen. Taylor in his present no-party position. I believe the feeling in favor of Mr. Clay is growing stronger every day," &c., &c.



and judgment, against which I oppose my own, and that of a hundred others, whom I have heard speak of it since. That the resolution would not have been adopted, I have never said. I said the friends of Mr. Clay indulged a well-grounded hope that it would not pass. I do not now believe it would have passed. But this is mere opinion, founded, however, upon strong circumstances. It certainly would have been, at best, doubtful. But I have no doubt at all that, if the facts had been presented as they were, to wit, that Kentucky had "*simply*" appointed delegates, and that somebody had said a majority of the North Carolina convention were in favor of Gen. Taylor, that the Virginia convention would have been content to follow the example set them by those two States.

There is only one other paragraph in this quadruple production that I care to notice—it is that in which the attempt is made, in the following sentence, to make it appear that I have charged General Taylor with being a Wilmot Proviso man, when I have expressly disclaimed it, because I did not believe it. The article reads, "But, seriously, does Mr. Botts believe for a moment that General Taylor entertains objectionable opinions on this subject? Can he possibly believe any such thing, or have any doubts at all in regard to it? Yet such is the caption of one of his chapters." Now, would not one who had not read my address suppose that I had headed one of my chapters, "*General Taylor a Wilmot Proviso man?*" Instead of that their caption is borrowed from mine, which is, "*General Taylor on the Wilmot Proviso;*" which, from the caption of which they complain, might as well have been intended to defend as to accuse him. But what is my language in respect to it? Here it is:

"I will not do General Taylor the injustice to say he will *not veto* the Wilmot Proviso, if he should be elected, and it should pass during his term;" and I then published the letter of his friend, Mr. Andrew Stewart, of Pennsylvania, to show that he was making fair weather with the North on that subject for General Taylor, by endeavoring to prove, from General Taylor's own letter, that he would not veto it if it should be adopted. I certainly never suspected him of favoring the Wilmot Proviso.

So much for the pamphlet. I have answered all that I consider worthy of refutation or serious consideration. I do not say this in any spirit of disparagement, but because I really think the whole production unworthy the intellects of the humblest of the four of my honorable colleagues with a good case. They have not answered satisfactorily, I think, any of my positions, and therefore I shall not endeavor to enforce them. As to their figures, I confess I do not understand them; my recollection does not extend to *vulgar* fractions.

In the convention, and in my address, I asked "what are General Taylor's opinions upon the great and absorbing question of the Mexican war? Is he for the absorption and annexation of Mexico? Is he for a defensive line and indemnity, or is he against the acquisition of territory?"

Fortunately, before this leap in the dark is taken, I have the means of answering the question, which must be taken as conclusive until the denial comes from his own pen.

A short time since, the Legislature of Mississippi appointed a committee to wait on General Taylor, and invite him to Jackson (the seat of Government of Mississippi) to partake of the hospitalities of the State. Rumors of an extraordinary character reached my ears as to the nature of the conversation reported by that committee to have taken place with General Taylor on the subject of the tariff and the war. At my instance a member of Congress from Mississippi addressed a letter to the chairman of that committee to ascertain precisely what was said. Here is his answer:

"In regard to the conversation had with General Taylor, I have to say, we did not talk on the tariff—we did on the war. He expressed himself IN FAVOR OF THE WAR; he said HE WAS DECIDEDLY IN FAVOR OF PROSECUTING IT VIGOROUSLY, till they should yield to an honorable peace; HE WAS FOR INDEMNITY CERTAIN, AND THAT TERRITORIAL; was not wedded to any line particularly, but thought perhaps, as a kind of compromise with the Wilmot Proviso men, we had better go up to the 32<sup>d</sup>, making the Rio Grande the western boundary up to that degree, and said the South should never agree to the provisions of the Wilmot Proviso; although he did not believe there ever would be slavery there, yet if the country was acquired, the citizens should be left free on that subject. HE SAYS ALL MEXICO WILL EVENTUALLY COME INTO OUR GOVERNMENT BY DEGREES; THAT IT CANNOT BE AVOIDED. On the subject of politics he said he was no politician; had been three-fourths of his life in the army; devoted his time and mind to that service, and paid but little attention to any thing else."

This is all of the letter that relates to General Taylor or political subjects.

By the foregoing, then, it appears that General Taylor is in favor of *prosecuting the war vigorously*, and claiming *indemnity certain*; and, although he is wedded to no particular line, yet he goes into the Presidential chair if elected *under a full and solemn conviction that by degrees the whole of Mexico must come into our Government, and that it cannot be avoided*. The presumption is fair that he will not resist it. Let no more opposition be made to the vigorous prosecution of this war, by Mr. Polk, on the part of those who still insist upon the election of Gen. Taylor. Let no more resistance be made to indemnity, by territorial acquisition, on the part of those who still advocate his claims. Let no more clamor be raised against "manifest destiny," leading to the absorption and annihilation of Mexico, when the Conservative Whig party of this country shall have selected as their Chief Magistrate, (without whose agency and will it can never be accomplished,) one who believes it cannot be avoided, and will not therefore resist it. Let those go for him who may; if these are his opinions, I know not how he can go into that office by any agency of mine. I know not how I can vote for any man who goes for indemnity for this war, already pronounced by the Whig party to have been unnecessarily and unconstitutionally made by the President. I cannot be reconciled to vote for any man who takes the ground that the ultimate annexation of Mexico to the United States is *unavoidable*. There is one way in which it can be avoided, and that way I will adopt as far as my vote will go; and it is, by having a President who is opposed to it, and will forever resist it, as not only *avoidable*, but *destructive* to our Union, our liberty, and our happiness.

The principles of the Whig party may be "*obsolete*" as represented by my colleagues, and Mr. Clay may be an obsolete candidate, as he assuredly was with most or all of the leading men of the convention, who spoke freely of him as an "incubus" upon the Whig party, and that he must be overthrown; and that was the object of the resolution adopted, *that Gen. Taylor was the choice of the Whigs of Virginia as President*—not that he was more available. But, if they are not obsolete, all men, and all questions, and all issues, shall with me give place to this, whenever it is presented. I shall hold all men and all questions subordinate to that of resistance—firm, decided, unflinching resistance—to a vigorous prosecution of this war, to territorial acquisition as indemnity, and ultimate annexation to the United States.

The editors of the Whig and Compiler find great fault with me for not yielding my support to Gen. Taylor; if I were disposed to embark in a war of words with any of those gentlemen, I should have no more to do than refer to their own files for twelve months last past, until the Legislature recommended him, and ask them to give me the reasons for their most sudden and extraordinary change. They were greatly dissatisfied with Gen. Taylor's "Signal letter;" and, at every new development from his pen, they became more and more dissatisfied, until, at last, he has said he will take a nomination from Natives,



Whigs, or Democrats; but, if we take him, it must be on our own responsibility, for he will make no pledges, that he will not be the exponent of our party doctrines, and that he will not look to the principles of the party as the rule of his action. And now, forsooth, when they have changed, and have become his warm advocates, against their former judgment, they find fault with me, and complain of my injustice to Gen. Taylor in not recognising him as a sound, true, and orthodox Whig. All I have to say to those gentlemen is, that they complain of me for as little cause as they had for the change they themselves have undergone; while I could, with equal vehemence, complain of them for their desertion of the position which, with me, they occupied up to the middle of December, and even up to a later period. And will they or any others be good enough to inform me by what privilege or rule of construction they, as editors, claim the right to express their preference for General Taylor, and deny to me the right to express my preference for Mr. Clay, or any other citizen? If I were the editor of a newspaper, I would write day by day, until the 7th of June, in maintenance of *Whig principles not obsolete*, and in favor of a *Whig candidate not obsolete*, and no one would question my right; but, as I am not, tame submission to the will of others is required as a duty. Well, when I lose the power to speak, and the power to write, I may submit. And when the National Convention shall have decided, I will submit. And, if I cannot go with them, I certainly will not go against them. And let them nominate who they may, and if it be Gen. Taylor, and I can be satisfied he is a true Whig, I will vote for him heartily.

On the 4th of January last the Richmond Whig held the following language:

*"General Taylor's position.—We are Whigs—Party-Whigs—and we have therefore regretted the position in which Gen. Taylor has been placed by his no-party Whig friends. But, while he cannot be our choice for the Presidency while occupying that anomalous position, we shall nevertheless, with our knowledge of his sentiments, support him cheerfully, if we can by that means most certainly expel the present dynasty from power. We want no pledges from General Taylor; the Whigs have never asked them of their candidates. But we do think that the opinions of candidates for the Presidency and Vice Presidency, upon leading questions of foreign and domestic policy, should be made known to the great body of the people before they are called upon to vote; for, WHY NEED THE VOTERS BE INTELLIGENT IF THEY ARE TO VOTE IN THE DARK IN REGARD TO THE OPINIONS OF THE CANDIDATES FOR THEIR SUFFRAGES? See, for example, what is already transpiring: The Washington correspondent of the New York Courier and Enquirer intimates that Gen. Taylor is in favor of the Tariff of 1846 for the Sub-treasury, and in favor of territorial indemnity from Mexico. The Cincinnati Atlas, on the other hand, denies the statement in toto on "undeniable authority." Now, how is a conscientious voter, having access to no authentic sources of information, to decide between these conflicting statements?"*

*"The Washington National Whig likewise pronounces the statement that Gen. Taylor entertains the above sentiments, to be utterly unfounded; as we, too, are satisfied it is. And we shall be very much gratified if it shall turn out to be correct, as stated by our Washington contemporary, that the country "will get Gen. Taylor's opinions over his own signature in all proper time," and that the Whigs "will be more than satisfied" with them."*

Well, the proper time has arrived; and so far from General Taylor's doing what the Whig expected, and thought every intelligent Whig voter had a right to demand, he is not only still mysterious, but refuses to occupy any position identified with the Whig party. And, when I call for what I was promised, and what the Whig said I was entitled to receive, a war is made upon me, and they go so far as to endorse the abuse of some chattering magpie from Nelson, who rates me for my self-sufficiency and arrogance in addressing the Whigs of Virginia. Upon this subject I have only to say, that my self-sufficiency and arrogance are easily measured. I have just so much self-sufficiency as leads me to form my own opinions, upon my own reflections, upon any subject, and not to change them *only* because a majority of those by whom I am surrounded

differ with me. And my arrogance carries me just so far as may be necessary to express, freely and fearlessly, to the world whatever I may choose to think and publish. But let it be recollected by the community that there is no Clay paper in Richmond to present the other side of the question; and, if all the letters, or extracts of all the letters, I receive from Virginia, commending my course, (to say nothing of those received from elsewhere,) and denouncing theirs, were sent to them for publication, it would take them many weeks to get through with the task.

I will furnish, for the edification of the Whig press in Virginia, a few out of a very large number that could be presented, as extracts on the subject of the late convention and this mischievous pamphlet of mine.

The first is from one of the most respectable gentlemen in Virginia:

“LONEARDY GROVE, Mecklenburg co., March 16.

“I have never taken any active part in politics, but I am a Whig in principle, because I am fully persuaded that *Whig measures* are essential to the prosperity of our country and to the preservation of our republican form of government, and I have seen with a degree of indignation and chagrin which no language could express the course of certain politicians, who, professing ardent attachment to the Whig cause, are, as I believe, really endeavoring to break down the Whig party, and organize a new one to serve their own selfish purposes. I have seen, I say, with indignation, their efforts to set aside not only Mr. Clay, but all the other tried statesmen of the Whig party, and substitute, as the candidate of the party, a mere military chieftain, possessing, so far as I know, no single qualification for the office of President of the United States.

“In this emergency, what are the friends of Mr. Clay and the Whig cause in Virginia to do? What can we do? Shall we remain silent under the most intolerable mis-representation by the convention of the wishes of the State, or shall we call public meetings and denounce the proceedings of the convention, and proclaim to the world that (to use no harsher term) that body was *most egregiously deceived* in the opinion it formed and proclaimed that General Taylor was the choice of the Whigs of the State.

“Though personally a stranger to you, I have long been familiar with and admired your public career, so bold and honest, and contrasting so remarkably with the timid, vacillating, and majority-seeking course of most of our public men.”

The next is from a former member of Congress:

“HARRISBURG, March 29, 1848.

“One of our prominent political friends who sympathizes strongly with you in your effort to save or prevent the dissolution of the Whig party by the nomination of a candidate who denies the party, has made the enclosed list of prominent and active men, to whom he desires should be sent your last letter—if possible, under your own frank.

[Here follows a list of 150 names.]

Another is from one of the warmest Whigs in Kentucky, to his Representative, who is a Taylor man:

“Send some of Botus’ address to the Whigs of Virginia. It is the most important document of the age.”

Another, from Ohio:

“Can’t you send me several hundred copies of your late address? Your country will reward you for the great service you are rendering the good, the *true cause*.”

Another, from Ohio:

“Go on, noble, generous, magnanimous soldier in the true faith; your country will not forget you. Scatter your address over the whole country. It works like a charm.”

One from New York:

“Our thanks, ten thousand times told, for the revival and regeneration of the Whig party, about to be lost. We are indebted to your exertions alone; but for your timely interference we were gone.”

Another:

“In the name of God, the party, and the country, why don’t you send your pamphlet into every region of the United States, proving Mr. Clay’s availability, and that General Taylor, to use your own language, is neither of us nor with us.”



These extracts of letters are not paraded for the gratification of any self-pride or vainglory, but to let my friends of the press perceive that there are other parts of the world besides Virginia, and that there are other Whigs, who differ with them as to my rashness, imprudence, and mischievous propensities.

If these gentlemen meant to say that what I have done has not advanced *their objects* or the objects of the convention, or if they supposed that it was my design to aid the objects of the convention, I can assure them they have misunderstood my purpose. It was exactly *that* I designed to defeat. I believed General Taylor's nomination, in his present position, would be the destruction of the Whig party; and I was willing, if necessary, to sacrifice myself to secure the nomination of any one, who was not ashamed to avow Whig principles, or identify himself with the Whig party; and if I should defeat their views, I shall have accomplished my own.

Now, what is the remedy I have proposed, to counteract the mischief that has been done by the convention of Virginia, as from every part of the State I hear of great dissatisfaction with their proceedings? Is it to distract the Whig party at the spring election, as charged? On the contrary, it is an endeavor to unite them, and, when the elections are over, then to adopt a course by which their views and preferences can be ascertained. I proposed that at their May courts, between the elections and the meeting of the National Convention, they should hold meetings, and express their preference for General Taylor or Mr. Clay. That their delegates might ascertain their views, where they had been misrepresented. And who can object to this? Who complains that the people should say to their delegate, we wish you to cast our vote for Mr. Clay, or for General Taylor, or for General Scott. There can be no objection to it, except with two classes of persons: the first are those who do not care to have the public voice represented, so their own individual wishes can be accommodated; and the second, those who fear the result of such meetings will frustrate their own designs. To neither of these classes do I address myself; but to the masses of the free, intelligent, virtuous voting Whig population of the State. I know the politicians are against me, and it is against them I am warring for the people who have been misrepresented.

Is there any thing of disorganization in this? Is it not, on the contrary, calculated, as it is designed, to restore organization which was interrupted and broken up by the utter disregard paid to Mr. Clay and his friends by the convention itself?

There are two statements that have been made—the one by the authors of the pamphlet before me, and the other by the editors of the Whig—which may be misapprehended, if not corrected.

In regard to the first, the pamphlet says:

“In conclusion, on this topic, we would like to understand how it is, that our colleague has had such imaginings as to Gen. Taylor's politics, and yet has been so ready to make an arrangement, by which he should be run as Vice President on the ticket of Mr. Clay as President.”

I recollect to have said some time ago to Mr. Preston, and perhaps to others, in reference to Gen. Taylor's declaration that as he had formed no opinion on the subject of a bank or a tariff, he ought to take lessons for four years, and they ought to be satisfied to make him Vice President first, and then we might make him President afterwards; this was said half in jest, half in earnest—all in earnest if you choose, though it is certain I have never attempted to make any such arrangement. The only answer necessary to be made is this—that I hold that there is *some slight shade of difference* between a President, *clothed with all power*, and a Vice President *entirely stripped of power*; and even now I might, with consistency, rather than see the Whig party defeated by division among ourselves, agree to take General Taylor as Vice President as a compro-

mise, in order to secure a greater good by the election of one who *has* formed his opinions on these and all other political questions, rather than a Locofoco should succeed; and I see no great harm, nor inconsistency in this, provided we could do no better. Certainly, gentlemen who go entirely for "*expediency*," cannot object to it; but if further answer were necessary, I might add, that when I said so, it was before his letter to Peter Sken Smith, or his letter to Col. Mitchell, or his views on the war were made known to me. I hope the gentlemen are answered.

The second statement is in the *Whig* of the 20th, in which I am said to have involved myself in a most extraordinary discrepancy (from which I must relieve myself as best I can) in my former address, by first alleging that there was a foregone conclusion in the convention to nominate Gen. Taylor when it met, and afterwards to ascribe that result to the telegraphic news. Well, I think if no greater flaw can be picked out of that address by the astute conductors of that paper with which to fall out, it must be a very perfect production. Now, how does this extraordinary discrepancy appear?

Why, although there was, when the convention met, (some say from the circumstance of its being picked and packed for the purpose,) a foregone conclusion to nominate Gen. Taylor, yet, in the language of the address, "such was the effect produced by this letter,—Gen. Taylor's letter to Peter Sken Smith—together with other matter that had been presented by the undersigned, that the friends of Mr. Clay indulged a well-grounded hope that they would ultimately succeed in having the whole subject transferred to the National Convention for its consideration, uninfluenced by any expression of preference for Gen. Taylor," and then comes the telegraphic despatch, which settled the question as it was originally intended. What an extraordinary discrepancy, truly! "*A mare's nest has been found at last.*"

Upon the score of Mr. Clay's availability I have only one word to add, and that is, that the impetuosity of the people is breaking down all restraints, and that such evidence of personal and political popularity was never exhibited before in this country; with three-fourths of the politicians, and men who hope to acquire a back-stair influence and importance at the White House, and with nine-tenths of the public press against him, the people are elevating him over the heads of politicians and presses combined, and pressing him forward to the Presidential chair unmindful of their entreaties, and disregarding his own cherished inclinations for retirement and repose—the people will have him—it is "*manifest destiny*," and *resistance is useless*.

Since writing the above, another letter from Gen. Taylor has come to hand, and I presume "there are a few more left of the same sort." It is written to a committee appointed by a meeting of citizens of Montgomery, Alabama, without distinction of party, nominating him for the Presidency. Here is what he says, and it is submitted without comment—it speaks for itself, and all comment would be idle and useless:

"BATON ROUGE, LA., January 23, 1848.

"GENTLEMEN: Your complimentary communication of the 10th instant, enclosing to me a copy of the preamble and resolutions adopted on the 8th instant, by a public meeting of my fellow citizens, without distinction of party, in Montgomery, Alabama, has been received.

"For the high honor which they have been pleased to confer upon me by thus nominating me for the Presidency of the United States, and for the very kind language in which they have seen fit to notice my past life and services, I beg you as their representatives to accept my profound acknowledgments; and to assure my fellow citizens who composed this meeting, that *I shall offer no active opposition to the use of my name in connexion with this responsible office, as long as they continue to use it thus independent of party distinctions.*

"I am, gentlemen, with high respect, your obedient servant,

"Z. TAYLOR."



It may be well, however, to inquire what course the General will pursue, if the National Convention *should use* his name, *not* independent of party distinctions; and whether the National Convention to be held in Philadelphia in June next is expected to be a *Whig party convention* exclusively, independent of party distinctions; and if so, and he should be nominated as the *Whig* candidate, whether he could feel himself at liberty to accept it, with this pledge, and others of a similar nature, to the no-party meetings of the country. I certainly should think he could not accept it consistently with the above letter.

I have just seen my organ, as the Taylor men call it—Heaven save us—the Richmond Enquirer, which, in its *usual accommodating and liberal spirit*, has grouped together the many hard “flings” of the “Lynchburg Patriot,” the “Lynchburg Virginian,” the “Richmond Republican,” and a “Delegate from Albemarle” levelled at me, in which I am represented as the “genius of political discord,” the “hero of political frays,” as “dictator,” as “the rashest and most imprudent man in Virginia,” as “stubborn and stiff-necked,” and other such gentle, courteous, and conciliatory terms, accompanied, it is true, with many honeyed phrases, such as “with a strong and discriminating mind,” “high powers as a debater,” “great firmness of purpose,” “powerful in argument, and vehement in declamation,” which only serves to embarrass me, as I am in doubt, as to which I am most indifferent, or which I should most appreciate, their censure or their praise; I feel no unkindness towards either “Tray,” “Blanche,” or “Sweetheart;” their excuse is to be found in the *lack* of the very qualities they ascribe to me, to wit, “strong and discriminating minds,” and “great firmness of purpose;” if they had been blessed with either one or the other, or both of these essential requisites, of men fit to lead in political warfare, *we should* not now occupy our relative positions on the questions at issue; they have neither had the discrimination to perceive the true position of General Taylor, nor the firmness of purpose to adhere to their own long cherished principles, but like many others, they were each anxious to be the “Vicar of Bray;” and now that they find that their no-party candidate is effectually laid on the shelf by the great Whig party of the nation, and that the politicians are overthrown by the people, *in their agony*, for having “bent the knee to Baal,” when “thrift” cannot “follow fawning,” poor souls, they take it *all* out upon me; well, rail on, gentlemen, my love of discord will not harm you; I shall quarrel with neither of you; I am in no manner indebted to either of you for what I am; I do not fear that you can rob me of what I have, little as it is; but when you learn the sentiment of the Whig party, I say *Whig party*, you will then perhaps begin to think you are not the great Sanhedrims of the party, State or national. It is very strange that a paper that does so much mischief should be written for, and its circulation courted by the Whigs in almost every part of the United States that it has reached; and that, while thousands have been subscribed for and sent off, the demand for it yet continues; and it is impossible for me to furnish the demand on me for its circulation, and as much in Virginia as elsewhere. Now, those who desire its circulation so extensively must either be greatly mistaken in its results, or these controllers of public opinion, and of my personal rights, have not “discriminated” wisely. Time will show. If their candidate is nominated, I will give it up; if mine is nominated, I will forgive them, not only for their abuse of me, but for their want of discernment and firmness of purpose, especially if they will excuse me for the want of dignity in taking this notice of what they have said.

But, in good earnest, what have I done to incur the censure of the Whig press in such unmeasured terms? Why, I have chosen to prefer the *favorite candidate* of the Whig party of the United States, to the favorite candidate of an

almost self-constituted convention of Virginia. I have chosen to enter the lists almost single-handed and alone, (for those of the Clay party in Virginia have not chosen to "afford me aid and comfort," except by *private* letters,) against the most fearful odds; and to use my best exertions to secure the nomination of Mr. Clay, as they have used *their best exertions* to secure that of General Taylor. Are my rights not equal to theirs? Am I bound to surrender my judgment to their dictation? What claims to consistency can they set up for denouncing me for my support of Mr. Clay, and of Mr. Clay's principles, which they so zealously advocated four years ago? Has Mr. Clay changed? Have I changed? Or have they changed? And if they have changed, where is to be found the obligation upon men to change with them! If to think for myself is an offence, I shall offend perpetually; if to say what I think be a crime, I shall prove the worst of criminals; especially when I see principles dearly cherished and long advocated sacrificed to "*expediency*," that would have been scouted by the party in its better days; and if it is thought to be an easier task to turn the war upon me than to defend General Taylor's position, let the war be carried on, as long and as hard as the boldest of them dare to wage it; I shall be there all the time, unawed and ready for the defence of my principles and myself. How much better it would have become them to show my errors, to defend the position their candidate had assumed, to prove him a thorough Whig, worthy of Whig confidence and support, than to turn the question into one of personal abuse of me. It is a surrender of the question, and must prove so with all intelligent and reflecting men.

JNO. M. BOTTS.

WASHINGTON, March 30, 1848.

#### POSTSCRIPT.

While correcting the proof sheet of the above, I have received a paper called the "Virginia Patriot," just started in Lynchburg, by two very respectable and tolerably intelligent gentlemen, but somewhat *raw* in their vocation, and *Neophytes* in their position; if they had been veteran politicians, of extended fame and reputation, perfect schoolmasters in their new trade, they could not have made a more labored effort to disparage my "usefulness," and taken greater license in scolding and "*whipping in*" than they have done to shear "*Sampson of his strength*," notwithstanding "they have no fear that his late pronunciamiento will have any very serious effect upon the people of Virginia or the National Convention." As to their abuse, which might have been tempered with better manners for new beginners, I am as indifferent as if it had neither been written nor published, for I hope to outlive the "*censure and rebuke*" of these most learned judges, matchless in all the properties of the goose—*quill*, I mean. I hope to eat as hearty, sleep as sound, and feel as tranquil, as if their wrath had never been disturbed by my pronunciamientos, in which, "*as they can do no harm*," I might be permitted to indulge an idle hour, for pastime and recreation, without having it laid on quite so thick by these renowned champions of "*No-partyism*." I do not belong to their party. Let me tell them again, I belong to the WHIG party, and not to the "OBSOLETE PRINCIPLE PARTY;" and they have no right to scold at me for not joining them. But this is not what I began to write about. That paper makes a statement that will mislead its readers, if it is not corrected. It says: "Virginia has already acted, and she cannot stultify herself by unsaying what she has emphatically declared—that



Gen. Taylor is her choice AS A CANDIDATE for the Presidency." This would make the action of the convention more enduring and obligatory than a law; for an unwise law *may be repealed*, and she stultifies herself with any nonsensical notion, as to keep it on her statute book when she knows it to be untrue and unwise. But Virginia has done no such thing, and these gentlemen voted in convention (if that is their impression) for what *they did not understand*, and they are writing now about what they *know nothing of*. It is the very essence of my complaint, that the convention declared what no one man, on his individual responsibility, will endorse—that "General Taylor was the choice of the Whigs of Virginia for the Presidency of the United States;" and not their choice *as a candidate*; and yet they themselves italicise the word, thus drawing the distinction between choice as a *candidate* and choice as *President*; and the resolution expresses *precisely* what, upon full deliberation, it was *intended* the convention should *be made* to declare. It was intended, and written, that it might exert its influence, not only on the delegation appointed, but upon other States that had to appoint their delegates, and upon the National Convention itself; and I avail myself of the authority of the Virginia Patriot to show that *they*, both *members* of the convention, and one a Legislative member, did not know what they were doing, and that the convention did not understand what *they* were required to do, and that it did misrepresent the sentiment of the Whig party of the State, and that the people should correct it, in their primary assemblies in all the month of May, after the elections are over, and they will allow themselves to be stultified if they don't do it.

As there is no Clay paper accessible for the publication of whatever may show the *changing* sentiment of the country in favor of Mr. Clay, I attach the following editorial from the "American Whig" of March 25th, published in "GRIFFIN," Georgia, A TAYLOR PAPER, with Gen. Taylor's name still flying at its mast head. How can the Whigs of Virginia be enlightened when they look to the papers published in their own State, and they *all*, with some three or four exceptions in the interior, publish every thing on one side and nothing on the other. Common fairness to a common cause would require equal justice to all.

JNO. M. BOTTS.

THE NEXT PRESIDENCY.—Judging from the signs of the times, and the feeling among the people, which is daily being exhibited, we begin to believe strongly that Mr. Clay and Mr. Polk will run their race over again this fall for the Presidency. The Democratic Convention for nomination assembles at Baltimore on the fourth Monday in May, and as a matter of course cannot know then what the Whigs will do; but will have to select from among their prominent men one that, in their opinion, will give the most general satisfaction to the party; and the fear that throwing Mr. Polk aside, and selecting another, will give strong evidence to their opponents that they are not satisfied with his administration, together with the courtesy due Mr. Polk of a tender of a second nomination, will have great weight in securing for him many votes in the Convention, and we think that no one will doubt that, if a nomination be tendered him, it will be readily accepted.

Should this be the case, if Mr. Polk is renominated by his party, there are many influences existing in the minds of Whigs that will prompt them to put Mr. Clay against him again. Many Whigs view the result of the last election as not a full and fair expression of the will of the American people. Many influences were brought to bear in that contest that cannot be used again, and in justice ought not to have had any weight then; but as they had their weight, and probably caused a different result from what would have taken place under other circumstances, they are unwilling to take the result of that election as conclusive evidence of the public will on all the issues then before the country.

Many Whigs, and not a few Democrats, we are aware, have declared for General Taylor; out, in nine cases out of ten, the Whigs that have so declared did so under the belief that Mr. Clay would not consent to run again, and many of the Democrats were influenced by a belief that General Taylor was of their party, as is shown by the letter of the honorable Henry A.

Muhlenberg, which we publish to-day, and we may reasonably expect that, like him, so soon as they are convinced that they are in error, they will be retract and vote their own party ticket.

In view of these facts, we are not prepared to conclude that Mr. Clay is not the stronger man of the two. We know that the name of Clay creates more enthusiasm in the minds of Whigs than any other name that can be mentioned, and we doubt not that every man who owns the name of Whig will accord to him a hearty support. We have, in order to satisfy ourselves with regard to the feelings of the Whigs in this section, on the subject of the next Presidency, as between General Taylor and Mr. Clay, made it our business to make a personal inquiry of every Whig with whom we have conversed on the subject. We commenced this inquiry more than three months ago, and have continued it up to the present time; and we must acknowledge that the result of the inquiries we have made convinces us that nineteen out of every twenty of the Whigs are for Mr. Clay as their first choice, and nearly all who are for General Taylor take him because they believe him the more available. Different feelings may exist in other sections, but if the Whig feeling in this part of Georgia is a fair exponent of the general Whig feeling of the whole Union, Mr. Clay ought to be the candidate.

We know, too, that several States have declared for Gen. Taylor, either through their Legislatures or Conventions, but these States are confined to the South and Southwest, and all of which voted for Mr. Polk at the last election, and will probably vote for the Democratic candidate at the next. Those States that voted for Mr. Clay, and may be relied on to vote for the Whig candidate, be he whom he may, have not yet expressed their preference. These, together with New York and Pennsylvania, ought to choose the candidate, because they have the power to elect, and without them no man can be elected; and, from what we can learn from the most reliable sources, a large majority of the Whigs of those States prefer Mr. Clay. That the main Whig strength of the Union prefers Mr. Clay, we are now bound to admit; and if so, the choice of the Whig strength ought to decide the question. If the Whigs desire to succeed, they ought to select that candidate who can most certainly command the vote of the most and largest States; and if this be done we are persuaded Mr. Clay will be the nominee.

TO THE

WHOLE WHIG PARTY OF THE UNITED STATES.

25-10

A short time since it was my pleasure, because I felt it to be my duty, to publish an address to the Whigs of Virginia, upon the subjects connected with the late Whig State Convention, in which I undertook to show, first, that the preference, as expressed by that body, for General Taylor as President, did not conform to the sentiment of the Whig party, and also to show the means by which that expression of preference was obtained; secondly, that Mr. Clay was a more available candidate than any other that could be nominated; and, thirdly, that General Taylor (for whom, as a man and a soldier, I entertain a high respect and admiration) did not occupy *a political position* that would justify the Whig party in selecting him as the exponent of their party doctrines, and as the advocate and supporter of those principles which alone constitute the difference between ourselves and our opponents; for, if it is not *the adoption of the principles* of a party which constitute a man a member of that party, then I have lived to little advantage for five-and-forty years—as, from the time I first entered into political life up to the present moment, I have entertained the belief, now for the first time disputed, that it was *that* alone that made me a Whig and another a Democrat. But it seems I have been mistaken; and for one to say “*I am a Whig*,” is all-sufficient to establish his claims to orthodoxy, and entitle him to occupy the highest seat in the synagogue. All this may be so, but to my untutored and unsophisticated mind it has appeared that one might as well expect to enter the portals of heaven by declaring, “I am a Christian, although I do not recognise any obligations to the Almighty, or *adopt his precepts* as the rule of my action,” as to claim the Presidency at the hands of the Whigs, by saying, “I am a Whig; but you must take me on your own responsibility, as I will make no pledges, and will not be the exponent of your party doctrines, nor look to your principles as the rule of my action.” It was this consideration, combined with the belief that, if we did so, it would be the means of destroying the party to whose principles I have devoted the largest and most valuable portion of an active life, that prompted me to address the Whigs of Virginia.

When I penned that article, I was not insensible to the great odds and prejudices I had to encounter. I was not unmindful that I was arraying myself against the entire delegation in Congress from my own State, the Legislature of Virginia, the Whig State Convention, and the entire Whig press of my own district, (and, with one or two exceptions, of the whole State,) and that I was assuming a position which I presume no man, not besotted with vanity and self-importance, would from taste or preference, or *without necessity*, choose to occupy. I confess I see nothing in it very enviable to a public man, and it would require a very strong conviction of duty to force me into it. But, when convinced, if the odds had been ten times greater, I could not have been deterred from placing myself in open opposition to it. It is enough, I know, to crush any man who has not truth and justice for his *shield*. Upon these I



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and time, perhaps, will vindicate the correctness of my judgment; but, if these circumstances should arise to prevent it, and I should fall in an honest effort to discharge a solemn duty, I shall meet my fate with a more reconciled conscience than many of those who will have triumphed over me, by their tergiversations and unreal professions of devotion to a cause, that in their souls they desire to overthrow. It is not the first battle I have had to fight, single-handed and alone, against friend and foe, until the people came to the rescue, and forced the politicians to take the same course. I have not forgotten the scenes of 1841; they are about to be re-enacted.

When I presented my views in the address referred to, I had hoped there would be no farther occasion, for the present at least, that I should have more to say. But four of my colleagues—to wit, Mr. Pendleton, Mr. Preston, Mr. Fulton, and Mr. Flourney—have published a pamphlet, *intended* as an answer to mine, which, in regard to some of its facts and deductions, I purpose briefly, and very briefly, to notice. There is an ill-concealed vein, or attempt at irony, lurking through the piece, which I shall pass without observation, only for the reason that I feel that I am as far above its reach, as the attempt itself is unworthy of consideration. I seek no controversy with these gentlemen, or any others; I have indulged in no acrimonious remarks in reference to any individual; I have sought to disparage no one; I made no personal allusion to any one of the four except to Mr. Preston, and then in terms of respect and kindness; nor would they, if strength of argument had availed them, have been disposed to use so impotent an instrument against me, even under cover and disguise. Argument failing, a feeble effort at disparagement is adopted. Be it so. Let their tastes be gratified. I have a higher object to accomplish than to suffer this question to degenerate into a personal controversy—to see who can pen the sharpest and most pungent paragraph. I yield, without a sacrifice of vanity or pride, to the chivalric four.

The self-satisfaction and amiable complacency with which they look upon their own handicraft, and view their own position, is amusing! Having accomplished all they sought—to wit, *the overthrow of Mr. Clay* in Virginia—they cannot tolerate the idea that their triumph is to be disturbed by any manner of complaint from those who have been wronged; we must not appeal to those most interested, to repair that wrong, from an apprehension that an ill gained victory may be snatched from their grasp, even in the hour of rejoicing. It is more than intimated that it was an “unjustifiable arrogance” in me to complain of the proceedings of the convention, or to address myself “to the Whigs of Virginia;” and now I take a wider field, and address myself to the whole Whig party of the United States. Perhaps these honorable gentlemen may be better reconciled to my familiarity and freedom with the Whigs of Virginia, when I tell them, that I never shouted pæans to Jacksonism—that I never slid off from Jacksonism to Calhounism, nor from Calhounism to Conservatism, nor from Conservatism to Whigism, and will not now slide off from Whigism into “*No-partyism*,” and that my purpose is to keep united and indissoluble the Whig party, and not to break it up. I have been a Whig from the beginning, and a Whig all the time; and a Whig, true, genuine, and unadulterated, I mean to live and die; it is by my principles, and not “by the decision of Virginia, through good or evil, that I mean to stand or fall;” otherwise I should have been a Jackson man in 1828, again in '32; a Van Buren man in '36, again in '40; a Polk man in '44, and the man of some other Democrat in '48; but, as my attachment to majorities may be less than theirs, it may account for the difference between us. I have only to add here, that if there should ever be another convention held in Virginia for the purpose of ascertaining public sentiment, it is hoped that each county will send their delegates



from among its own citizens, who know their views, and will represent them truly; for, so far from its being true, as represented in their pamphlet before me, that the convention was composed of "650 delegates, coming fresh from almost every county and precinct, appointed just at the moment of action," there were nine counties represented by one gentleman each, many by two only, and in very many other instances, as in some of those already mentioned, by members of the Legislature, or citizens of Richmond, who had never set foot upon the soil, and in all probability scarcely knew a man by sight or by name in the counties they were representing; and there was one gentleman appointed a delegate from twelve counties, and therefore gave twelve votes, and by possibility may have decided twelve counties; while very many of them represented three, four, five, and six counties, and thus represented their own views without a knowledge of the views of those they represented; and this is called an expression of public sentiment.

My colleagues say, "We know of no State in this Union, the chance of carrying which is absolutely desperate, unless the party adopts the *wise* policy of placing the contest on *obsolete issues*, or prefers to stake its fortunes on the availability of '*obsolete candidates*.'" If this is not an abandonment, clear, open, and undisguised, of the principles of the Whig party, if they have not gone upon the platform Mr. Cost Johnson has erected, then I know not what it means.

What are the principles of the Whig party? The currency, and protection to American industry, of *the old issues*, are the most prominent and important. How have these old issues become obsolete? Have they become so by *their* adoption of the principles of the other party now in power, the truth, the wisdom, the justice, and practical working of which have, in their view, proved satisfactory and beneficial to the country? If so, why don't these gentlemen openly avow themselves in favor of free trade and the Sub-treasury? Then their influence with the Whig party would cease to operate. How else can they have become obsolete? If the measures now in force are unwise, impracticable, and injurious to the public interests, then *the old issues are not obsolete*; they must be renewed whenever we have the power to enforce them: and if they have grown *out of use*, because of the established virtue and wisdom of the measures *now in use*, and I believed it, I would consider myself as much a Locofoco as a Whig, and a little more so; because I would not adhere to any party whose principles I believe antagonistic to the public welfare.

And how has Mr. Clay become an obsolete—(not an unavailable) but an "*obsolete candidate*," except that his principles have been abandoned? And if this is the condition of the Whig party in Virginia, the sooner we know it the better. These declarations will occasion no little surprise with the constituents of some of the signers of that pamphlet, and I apprehend they will find it so. Then, if the old issues *are* obsolete, there is but one question at issue between the two parties, and that is the war question; and upon this point I will, before I close this communication, show that there is no choice between Mr. Polk and General Taylor; a beautiful condition of things, to which the Whig party is to be reduced by the *Locofoco State of Virginia*, and the disaffected members of the Whig party of that State, who think it more important that Virginia should be in the majority than that old Whig principles and old Whig champions should be successful.

Under the head of "The effects of Lightning," in the pamphlet before me, a different version is given to that which I gave, materially varying the question, and one altogether erroneous, as I conceive, and as I will establish. It is said—

"In the first place, we deny that there was any mistake or misstatement in announcing the news from Kentucky.

"Secondly, if there was any in regard to North Carolina it was of an accidental and immaterial character, and that even to that extent it rests on conflicting and uncertain recollections.

"And that, thirdly, and much more importantly, it did not influence the 'judgment and decision' of the convention.

"We disclaim all purpose to impute to Mr. Borrs intentional misstatement or misrepresentation of the facts, but we deny the literal accuracy of his report.

"At the close of Mr. Preston's speech on Friday evening, Mr. Archer, the president of the convention, handed him a letter, which he had received whilst Mr. P. was speaking. After rapidly running over the letter, Mr. Preston said, 'the telegraph has arrived; Kentucky has nominated General Taylor.' Mr. Borrs here rose from his seat, and, addressing himself to Mr. Preston, said, '*that was the Taylor convention.*' Mr. Preston replied 'yes,' but the other convention appointed out and out Taylor men, and both conventions appointed the same delegates."

"The telegraphic despatch above referred to was from one of the members of Congress from Kentucky, and a gentleman of the highest respectability; and there could be no reason to doubt its accuracy. Nobody has doubted its accuracy; it was the announcement based upon it that was objected to. His despatch was in the following words.

"HON. WILLIAM B. PRESTON:

"DEAR SIR: The Kentucky Whig convention, for presenting candidates for Governor, &c., simply appointed delegates *avowed* Taylor men. The Taylor convention, same day, nominated Taylor, and appointed the *same delegates*.

"Now, it will be seen that there is not the slightest discrepancy between the annunciation as made and the despatch itself, unless it be in the words '*out and out*' in place of the word '*avowed*.' We cannot, ourselves, perceive the importance of the variation."

Let us take the three propositions here laid down in regular order. First, "We deny that there was any mistake or misstatement in announcing the news from Kentucky."

Now let us see what the despatch contained, and what was the announcement which these gentlemen so confidently assert strictly corresponded the one with the other.

The despatch says, "The Kentucky Whig convention, for presenting candidates for Governor, &c., *simply* (mark that word) appointed delegates *avowed* Taylor men."

The announcement, according to their own shewing, was, "The telegraph has arrived; Kentucky has *nominated* General Taylor." As for the paragraph above quoted, about my interruption, &c., that will be disposed of presently.

Now, I do not mean to raise any question of veracity with these gentlemen, because I do not suspect them of being capable of telling an untruth, in the first place; and, secondly, because it would be both idle and ridiculous to do so, upon a subject to which there were from two to three thousand witnesses; but I do mean to raise a question of *fact*, of *recollection*, and *deduction*. What credit can be attached to their deductions when they themselves publish the announcement as above, in juxtaposition with the lightning despatch, and deny that there was any mistake or misstatement in the announcement; they *admit* that Mr. Preston said, "Kentucky has *nominated* General Taylor;" they *shew* that they were *authorized only* to say that Kentucky had "*simply*" appointed delegates. As for what the Taylor convention did it was of no moment, for they of course would nominate him, being assembled for that purpose only.

Let me recall the circumstances. They expected a despatch would arrive announcing a nomination, I had predicted it would not come; an honorable member of the House of Representatives from Kentucky, from whom their impressions had been chiefly derived, announces to them (*as if to correct an erroneous impression he had created*), THEY HAVE "SIMPLY" APPOINTED DELEGATES. Now let me ask, for what purpose could such a despatch have been presented to the convention? We had appointed our delegates. We asked them to stop there, not to trammel them with instructions by a resolution of preference, and predicted that this was what Kentucky would do; then why



was the telegraphic despatch introduced, if it was only to announce that Kentucky simply appointed delegates? Why was not the telegraphic despatch itself read; and, if it had been, would not the effect have been precisely opposite to that which was produced? Was the announcement made to operate in favor of my prediction and my views, or was it to overthrow them, and to sustain their own? If it had been so announced, would it not have sustained my position? Was it so intended? Did any one member of that convention so understand it? If so, why that shout upon shout, and yell upon yell, that followed? Why the declaration, from many quarters, that the question of availability was settled? These facts, I apprehend, will speak for themselves, in the absence of all other testimony; but if any such interruption on my part occurred, I must, in honor and sincerity, declare my entire and total ignorance of it, or any thing like it. I have not seen one man yet who was in that convention, except these four gentlemen, and one other, who did not leave it under the impression, that when Mr. Preston said "both conventions had nominated Old Zac," he meant both Whig and Locofoco conventions; which was confirmed by the declaration that immediately followed, "and now my lips are unsealed; I may say, what I would not have said two hours ago, but what I have long known, that only three members of the Kentucky legislature were opposed to him." I feel very confident that, at that time, I had never heard of a Taylor convention being held in Kentucky. This is my recollection on the subject; and having so expressed myself to Mr. McFarland next day, when I had read the despatch itself, which contained the first intimation I had of a Taylor convention, I am confirmed in its truth. He, as I recollect, was under the same impression, and it is impossible that either of us, or any other, could have been, if such conversation had passed. I have observed that a similar statement, word for word I believe, appeared in the Whig of the 20th. I should like to know if that article was written by the editors, and if they heard me make any such statement, or whether that statement was furnished to them by others.

Such an explanation of the announcement, as these gentlemen were present, could not have been received otherwise than as a concession to the correctness of my position, and as overthrowing their own; and, upon a review of their own production, they must become satisfied of their present mistake. The telegraphic despatch, as received and now published by them, certainly fortified my position; for I said Kentucky would simply appoint delegates; the despatch says they did "simply" appoint delegates; and yet the nomination was announced and received with greater demonstrations of triumph, on the part of General Taylor's friends, than I recollect ever to have witnessed in any public assembly of the same size. These facts are stronger than the fleeting recollections of frail humanity.

I have twenty letters and statements, in writing, all going to prove the literal correctness of my first statement. I will furnish the following only, as they *only* were intended by the writers (as far as I know) for publication. The difficulty of obtaining the views of gentlemen scattered over the State is apparent, and therefore I have not sought them; but the impressions of many of the citizens of Richmond, who were present as spectators, are before me, and they could be multiplied to any extent, if it were now deemed, or should hereafter become, necessary. The following is a letter from Mr. John Armistead Carter, and a note appended by Major Wooldridge, both of whom happened to be in Washington when the Whig of the 20th reached this city. I have seen very few members of the convention since, but not one that did not entirely concur with these gentlemen:



"WASHINGTON.

"MY DEAR SIR: I have just seen, in the Richmond Whig of the 20th of March, what purports to be a correction of your statement of the occurrences which took place in the late Virginia Whig convention. I think it proper to state that, before seeing the Whig of the 20th, I had read your statement, and did not doubt but that it would be concurred in by every member of the convention. It certainly contains, to the letter, a correct statement of facts, so far as my memory goes. The article in the Whig says: 'According to the concurring recollection of gentlemen to whom we have referred, the following was as nearly as it is possible to remember the precise language used: Mr. Preston said, the telegraph has arrived; Kentucky has nominated Gen. Taylor. Mr. Botts here interposed and said, that was the Taylor Convention. Yes, replied Mr. Preston, but the other convention appointed the same delegates.' I sat very near Mr. Preston, as one of the vice presidents of the body, and thus had a good opportunity of hearing what was said. I did not hear you make any such remark to Mr. Preston as the one stated above, viz: 'That was the Taylor convention.' And I think if gentlemen will recollect the shout upon shout which immediately followed Mr. Preston's proclamation, that Kentucky had nominated Gen. Taylor, they will see at once that such conversation could not have taken place at that time. Believing that all parties wish to arrive at the facts as they occurred, I have no objection to your making any use of this statement you may think proper."

JOHN A. CARTER."

"Yours, very respectfully,

"Hon. J. M. BORTS."

"I was a member of the Whig convention referred to, and have read Mr. Botts' address, and I am of opinion that the account he gives of what Mr. Preston said, as reported by the telegraph, is correct. A. S. WOOLDRIDGE."

But the second proposition is equally strange, to wit:

Secondly. If there was any (mistake or misstatement) in regard to North Carolina, it was of an accidental and immaterial character, and that, even to that extent, it rests on conflicting and uncertain recollections.

My language was, that Mr. Preston said: "And another telegraphic despatch has arrived; North Carolina, too, has nominated old Zac;" while the despatch, from an unknown and irresponsible quarter, stated that a decided majority of the convention were in favor of Gen. Taylor for the next Presidency, and *that* a mere opinion, an expression of the belief only of the writer, as the fact turned out to be entirely different, as will appear by the extract below of a letter from a most distinguished member of that body, and formerly a distinguished member of Congress,\* and this is said to have been, *if an error at all*, (God save the mark,) of an accidental and immaterial character. As for the accidental part of it, I am willing to concede it; but, as to its immateriality, I must take leave to differ with the honorable gentlemen, and say, that this is not the way in which I either measure or weigh the meaning of words; nor will they find any one, I apprehend, to agree with them as to the materiality of the mistake or misstatement. But it "rests on conflicting and uncertain recollections." What evidence there is of conflicting or uncertain recollection in the matter, is left for each one to conjecture for himself. It is not furnished. The testimony of the Richmond Whig is certainly against them when it says, *we* thought Mr. Preston stated it too broadly.

But, thirdly, and much more importantly, it did not influence the "judgment and decision" of the convention. This is a bare expression of their opinion

\* "RALEIGH, February 25, 1848.

My honest and candid opinion is, that at least two-thirds, and I really believe three-fourths, of the members would have voted a resolution expressing a preference for Mr. Clay as President. I made it a point to endeavor to ascertain the sense of men here in regard to this matter, and I not only found a general unwillingness to support Gen. Taylor in his present position, but I heard many declare that they would not vote for him, even if nominated by the convention, unless he more thoroughly identified himself with the Whig party. I doubt not different accounts will be written to W., I dare say, honestly; but, you may rely on it, the feelings of this convention, and, as far as I have been able to judge, of the people of the State generally, are utterly adverse to taking up Gen. Taylor in his present no-party position. I believe the feeling in favor of Mr. Clay is growing stronger every day," &c., &c.

and judgment, against which I oppose my own, and that of a hundred others, whom I have heard speak of it since. That the resolution would not have been adopted, I have never said. I said the friends of Mr. Clay indulged a well-grounded hope that it would not pass. I do not now believe it would have passed. But this is mere opinion, founded, however, upon strong circumstances. It certainly would have been, at best, doubtful. But I have no doubt at all that, if the facts had been presented as they were, to wit, that Kentucky had "*simply*" appointed delegates, and that somebody had said a majority of the North Carolina convention were in favor of Gen. Taylor, that the Virginia convention would have been content to follow the example set them by those two States.

There is only one other paragraph in this quadruple production that I care to notice—it is that in which the attempt is made, in the following sentence, to make it appear that I have charged General Taylor with being a Wilmot Proviso man, when I have expressly disclaimed it, because I did not believe it. The article reads, "But, seriously, does Mr. Botts believe for a moment that General Taylor entertains objectionable opinions on this subject? Can he possibly believe any such thing, or have any doubts at all in regard to it? Yet such is the caption of one of his chapters." Now, would not one who had not read my address suppose that I had headed one of my chapters, "*General Taylor a Wilmot Proviso man!*" Instead of that their caption is *borrowed from mine*, which is, "*General Taylor on the Wilmot Proviso;*" which, from the caption of which they complain, might as well have been intended to defend as to accuse him. But what is my language in respect to it? Here it is:

"I will not do General Taylor the injustice to say he will *not veto* the Wilmot Proviso, if he should be elected, and it should pass during his term;" and I then published the letter of his friend, Mr. Andrew Stewart, of Pennsylvania, to show that he was making fair weather with the North on that subject for General Taylor, by endeavoring to prove, from General Taylor's own letter, that he would not veto it if it should be adopted. I certainly never suspected him of favoring the Wilmot Proviso.

So much for the pamphlet. I have answered all that I consider worthy of refutation or serious consideration. I do not say this in any spirit of disparagement, but because I really think the whole production unworthy the intellects of the humblest of the four of my honorable colleagues with a good case. They have not answered satisfactorily, I think, any of my positions, and therefore I shall not endeavor to enforce them. As to their figures, I confess I do not understand them; my recollection does not extend to *vulgar* fractions.

In the convention, and in my address, I asked "what are General Taylor's opinions upon the great and absorbing question of the Mexican war? Is he for the absorption and annexation of Mexico? Is he for a defensive line and indemnity, or is he against the acquisition of territory?"

Fortunately, before this leap in the dark is taken, I have the means of answering the question, which must be taken as conclusive until the denial comes from his own pen.

A short time since, the Legislature of Mississippi appointed a committee to wait on General Taylor, and invite him to Jackson (the seat of Government of Mississippi) to partake of the hospitalities of the State. Rumors of an extraordinary character reached my ears as to the nature of the conversation reported by that committee to have taken place with General Taylor on the subject of the tariff and the war. At my instance a member of Congress from Mississippi addressed a letter to the chairman of that committee to ascertain precisely what was said. Here is his answer:



"In regard to the conversation had with General Taylor, I have to say, we did not talk on the tariff—we did on the war. He expressed himself **IN FAVOR OF THE WAR**; he said **HE WAS DECIDEDLY IN FAVOR OF PROSECUTING IT VIGOROUSLY**, till they should yield to an honorable peace; **HE WAS FOR INDEMNITY CERTAIN, AND THAT TERRITORIAL**; was not wedded to any line particularly, but thought perhaps, as a kind of compromise with the Wilmot Proviso men, we had better go up to the 32<sup>nd</sup>, making the Rio Grande the western boundary up to that degree, and said the South should never agree to the provisions of the Wilmot Proviso; although he did not believe there ever would be slavery there, yet if the country was acquired, the citizens should be left free on that subject. **HE SAYS ALL MEXICO WILL EVENTUALLY COME INTO OUR GOVERNMENT BY DEGREES; THAT IT CANNOT BE AVOIDED.** On the subject of politics he said he was no politician; had been three-fourths of his life in the army; devoted his time and mind to that service, and paid but little attention to any thing else."

This is all of the letter that relates to General Taylor or political subjects.

By the foregoing, then, it appears that General Taylor is in favor of *prosecuting the war vigorously*, and claiming *indemnity certain*; and, although he is wedded to no particular line, yet he goes into the Presidential chair if elected *under a full and solemn conviction that by degrees the whole of Mexico must come into our Government, and that it cannot be avoided.* The presumption is fair that he will not resist it. Let no more opposition be made to the vigorous prosecution of this war, by Mr. Polk, on the part of those who still insist upon the election of Gen. Taylor. Let no more resistance be made to indemnity, by territorial acquisition, on the part of those who still advocate his claims. Let no more clamor be raised against "manifest destiny," leading to the absorption and annihilation of Mexico, when the Conservative Whig party of this country shall have selected as their Chief Magistrate, (without whose agency and will it can never be accomplished,) one who believes it cannot be avoided, and will not therefore resist it. Let those go for him who may; if these are his opinions, I know not how he can go into that office by any agency of mine. I know not how I can vote for any man who goes for indemnity for this war, already pronounced by the Whig party to have been unnecessarily and unconstitutionally made by the President. I cannot be reconciled to vote for any man who takes the ground that the ultimate annexation of Mexico to the United States is *unavoidable*. There is one way in which it can be avoided, and that way I will adopt as far as my vote will go; and it is, by having a President who is opposed to it, and will forever resist it, as not only *avoidable*, but *destructive* to our Union, our liberty, and our happiness.

The principles of the Whig party may be "*obsolete*" as represented by my colleagues, and Mr. Clay may be an obsolete candidate, as he assuredly was with most or all of the leading men of the convention, who spoke freely of him as an "*incubus*" upon the Whig party, and that he must be overthrown; and that was the object of the resolution adopted, *that Gen. Taylor was the choice of the Whigs of Virginia as President*—not that he was more available. But, if they are not obsolete, all men, and all questions, and all issues, shall with me give place to this, whenever it is presented. I shall hold all men and all questions subordinate to that of resistance—firm, decided, unflinching resistance—to a vigorous prosecution of this war, to territorial acquisition as indemnity, and ultimate annexation to the United States.

The editors of the Whig and Compiler find great fault with me for not yielding my support to Gen. Taylor; if I were disposed to embark in a war of words with any of those gentlemen, I should have no more to do than refer to their own files for twelve months last past, until the Legislature recommended him, and ask them to give me the reasons for their most sudden and extraordinary change. They were greatly dissatisfied with Gen. Taylor's "Signal letter;" and, at every new development from his pen, they became more and more dissatisfied, until, at last, he has said he will take a nomination from Natives,



Whigs, or Democrats; but, if we take him, it must be on our own responsibility, for he will make no pledges, that he will not be the exponent of our party doctrines, and that he will not look to the principles of the party as the rule of his action. And now, forsooth, when they have changed, and have become his warm advocates, against their former judgment, they find fault with me, and complain of my injustice to Gen. Taylor in not recognising him as a sound, true, and orthodox Whig. All I have to say to those gentlemen is, that they complain of me for as little cause as they had for the change they themselves have undergone; while I could, with equal vehemence, complain of them for their desertion of the position which, with me, they occupied up to the middle of December, and even up to a later period. And will they or any others be good enough to inform me by what privilege or rule of construction they, *as editors*, claim the right to express their preference for General Taylor, and deny to me the right to express my preference for Mr. Clay, or any other citizen? If I were the editor of a newspaper, I would write day by day, until the 7th of June, in maintenance of *Whig principles not obsolete*, and in favor of a *Whig candidate not obsolete*, and no one would question my right; but, as I am not, tame submission to the will of others is required as a duty. Well, when I lose the power to speak, and the power to write, I may submit. And when the National Convention shall have decided, I will submit. And, if I cannot go with them, I certainly will not go against them. And let them nominate who they may, and if it be Gen. Taylor, and I can be satisfied he is a true Whig, I will vote for him heartily.

On the 4th of January last the Richmond Whig held the following language:

*"General Taylor's position.—We are Whigs—Party-Whigs—and we have therefore regretted the position in which Gen. Taylor has been placed by his no-party Whig friends. But, while he cannot be our choice for the Presidency while occupying that anomalous position, we shall nevertheless, with our knowledge of his sentiments, support him cheerfully, if we can by that means most certainly expel the present dynasty from power. We want no pledges from General Taylor; the Whigs have never asked them of their candidates. But we do think that the opinions of candidates for the Presidency and Vice Presidency, upon leading questions of foreign and domestic policy, should be made known to the great body of the people before they are called upon to vote; for, WHY NEED THE VOTERS BE INTELLIGENT IF THEY ARE TO VOTE IN THE DARK IN REGARD TO THE OPINIONS OF THE CANDIDATES FOR THEIR SUFFRAGES? See, for example, what is already transpiring: The Washington correspondent of the New York Courier and Enquirer intimates that Gen. Taylor is in favor of the Tariff of 1846, for the Sub-treasury, and in favor of territorial indemnity from Mexico. The Cincinnati Atlas, on the other hand, denies the statement in toto on "undeniable authority." Now, how is a conscientious voter, having access to no authentic sources of information, to decide between these conflicting statements?"*

*"The Washington National Whig likewise pronounces the statement that Gen. Taylor entertains the above sentiments, to be utterly unfounded; as we, too, are satisfied it is. And we shall be very much gratified if it shall turn out to be correct, as stated by our Washington cotemporary, that the country "will get Gen. Taylor's opinions over his own signature in all proper time," and that the Whigs "will be more than satisfied" with them."*

Well, the proper time has arrived; and so far from General Taylor's doing what the Whig expected, and thought every intelligent Whig voter had a right to demand, he is not only still mysterious, but refuses to occupy any position identified with the Whig party. And, when I call for what I was promised, and what the Whig said I was entitled to receive, a war is made upon me, and they go so far as to endorse the abuse of some chattering magpie from Nelson, who rates me for my self-sufficiency and arrogance in addressing the Whigs of Virginia. Upon this subject I have only to say, that my self-sufficiency and arrogance are easily measured. I have just so much self-sufficiency as leads me to form my own opinions, upon my own reflections, upon any subject, and not to change them *only* because a majority of those by whom I am surrounded

differ with me. And my arrogance carries me just so far as may be necessary to express, freely and fearlessly, to the world whatever I may choose to think and publish. But let it be recollected by the community that there is no Clay paper in Richmond to present the other side of the question; and, if all the letters, or extracts of all the letters, I receive from Virginia, commending my course, (to say nothing of those received from elsewhere,) and denouncing theirs, were sent to them for publication, it would take them many weeks to get through with the task.

I will furnish, for the edification of the Whig press in Virginia, a few out of a very large number that could be presented, as extracts on the subject of the late convention and this mischievous pamphlet of mine.

The first is from one of the most respectable gentlemen in Virginia:

"LOMBARDY GROVE, *Mecklenburg co., March 16.*

"I have never taken any active part in politics, but I am a *Whig* in principle, because I am fully persuaded that *Whig measures* are essential to the prosperity of our country and to the preservation of our republican form of government, and I have seen with a degree of indignation and chagrin which no language could express the course of certain politicians, who, professing ardent attachment to the *Whig* cause, are, as I believe, really endeavoring to break down the *Whig* party, and organize a new one to serve their own selfish purposes. I have seen, I say, with indignation, their efforts to set aside not only Mr. Clay, but all the other tried statesmen of the *Whig* party, and substitute, as the candidate of the party, a mere military chieftain, possessing, so far as I know, no single qualification for the office of President of the United States.

"In this emergency, what are the friends of Mr. Clay and the *Whig* cause in Virginia to do? What can we do? Shall we remain silent under the most intolerable misrepresentation by the convention of the wishes of the State, or shall we call public meetings and denounce the proceedings of the convention, and proclaim to the world that (to use no harsher term) that body was most egregiously deceived in the opinion it formed and proclaimed that General Taylor was the choice of the *Whigs* of the State.

"Though personally a stranger to you, I have long been familiar with and admired your public career, so bold and honest, and contrasting so remarkably with the timid, vacillating, and majority-seeking course of most of our public men."

The next is from a former member of Congress:

"HARRISBURG, *March 29, 1848.*

"One of our prominent political friends who sympathizes strongly with you in your effort to save or prevent the dissolution of the *Whig* party by the nomination of a candidate who denies the party, has made the enclosed list of prominent and active men, to whom he desires should be sent your last letter—if possible, under your own frank.

[Here follows a list of 150 names.]

Another is from one of the warmest *Whigs* in Kentucky, to his Representative, who is a Taylor man:

"Send some of Botts' address to the *Whigs* of Virginia. It is the most important document of the age."

Another, from Ohio:

"Can't you send me several hundred copies of your late address? Your country will reward you for the great service you are rendering the good, the *true cause*."

Another, from Ohio:

"Go on, noble, generous, magnanimous soldier in the true faith; your country will not forget you. Scatter your address over the whole country. It works like a charm."

One from New York:

"Our thanks, ten thousand times told, for the revival and regeneration of the *Whig* party, about to be lost. We are indebted to your exertions alone; but for your timely interference we were gone."

Another:

"In the name of God, the party, and the country, why don't you send your pamphlet into every region of the United States, proving Mr. Clay's availability, and that General Taylor, to use your own language, is neither of us nor with us."



These extracts of letters are not paraded for the gratification of any self-pride or vainglory, but to let my friends of the press perceive that there are other parts of the world besides Virginia, and that there are other Whigs, who differ with them as to my rashness, imprudence, and mischievous propensities.

If these gentlemen meant to say that what I have done has not advanced *their objects* or the objects of the convention, or if they supposed that it was my design to aid the objects of the convention, I can assure them they have misunderstood my purpose. It was exactly *that* I designed to defeat. I believed General Taylor's nomination, in his present position, would be the destruction of the Whig party; and I was willing, if necessary, to sacrifice myself to secure the nomination of any one, who was not ashamed to avow Whig principles, or identify himself with the Whig party; and if I should defeat their views, I shall have accomplished my own.

Now, what is the remedy I have proposed, to counteract the mischief that has been done by the convention of Virginia, as from every part of the State I hear of great dissatisfaction with their proceedings? Is it to distract the Whig party at the spring election, as charged? On the contrary, it is an endeavor to unite them, and, when the elections are over, then to adopt a course by which their views and preferences can be ascertained. I proposed that at their May courts, between the elections and the meeting of the National Convention, they should hold meetings, and express their preference for General Taylor or Mr. Clay. That their delegates might ascertain their views, where they had been misrepresented. And who can object to this? Who complains that the people should say to their delegate, we wish you to cast our vote for Mr. Clay, or for General Taylor, or for General Scott. There can be no objection to it, except with two classes of persons: the first are those who do not care to have the public voice represented, so their own individual wishes can be accommodated; and the second, those who fear the result of such meetings will frustrate their own designs. To neither of these classes do I address myself; but to the masses of the free, intelligent, virtuous voting Whig population of the State. I know the politicians are against me, and it is against them I am warring for the people who have been misrepresented.

Is there any thing of disorganization in this? Is it not, on the contrary, calculated, as it is designed, to restore organization which was interrupted and broken up by the utter disregard paid to Mr. Clay and his friends by the convention itself?

There are two statements that have been made—the one by the authors of the pamphlet before me, and the other by the editors of the Whig—which may be misapprehended, if not corrected.

In regard to the first, the pamphlet says:

“In conclusion, on this topic, we would like to understand how it is, that our colleague has had such imaginings as to Gen. Taylor's politics, and yet has been so ready to make an arrangement, by which he should be run as Vice President on the ticket of Mr. Clay as President.”

I recollect to have said some time ago to Mr. Preston, and perhaps to others, in reference to Gen. Taylor's declaration that as he had formed no opinion on the subject of a bank or a tariff, he ought to take lessons for four years, and they ought to be satisfied to make him Vice President first, and then we might make him President afterwards; this was said half in jest, half in earnest—all in earnest if you choose, though it is certain I have never attempted to make any such arrangement. The only answer necessary to be made is this—that I hold that there is *some slight shade of difference* between a President, *clothed with all power*, and a Vice President *entirely stripped of power*; and even now I might, with consistency, rather than see the Whig party defeated by division among ourselves, agree to take General Taylor as Vice President as a compro-



mise, in order to secure a greater good by the election of one who *has* formed his opinions on these and all other political questions, rather than a Locofoco should succeed; and I see no great harm, nor inconsistency in this, provided we could do no better. Certainly, gentlemen who go entirely for "*expediency*," cannot object to it; but if further answer were necessary, I might add, that when I said so, it was before his letter to Peter Sken Smith, or his letter to Col. Mitchell, or his views on the war were made known to me. I hope the gentlemen are answered.

The second statement is in the Whig of the 20th, in which I am said to have involved myself in a most extraordinary discrepancy (from which I must relieve myself as best I can) in my former address, by first alleging that there was a foregone conclusion in the convention to nominate Gen. Taylor when it met, and afterwards to ascribe that result to the telegraphic news. Well, I think if no greater flaw can be picked out of that address by the astute conductors of that paper with which to fall out, it must be a very perfect production. Now, how does this extraordinary discrepancy appear?

Why, although there was, when the convention met, (some say from the circumstance of its being picked and packed for the purpose,) a foregone conclusion to nominate Gen. Taylor, yet, in the language of the address, "such was the effect produced by this letter,—Gen. Taylor's letter to Peter Sken Smith—together with other matter that had been presented by the undersigned, that the friends of Mr. Clay indulged a well-grounded hope that they would ultimately succeed in having the whole subject transferred to the National Convention for its consideration, uninfluenced by any expression of preference for Gen. Taylor," and then comes the telegraphic despatch, which settled the question as it was originally intended. What an extraordinary discrepancy, truly! "A mare's nest has been found at last."

Upon the score of Mr. Clay's availability I have only one word to add, and that is, that the impetuosity of the people is breaking down all restraints, and that such evidence of personal and political popularity was never exhibited before in this country; with three-fourths of the politicians, and men who hope to acquire a back-stair influence and importance at the White House, and with nine-tenths of the public press against him, the people are elevating him over the heads of politicians and presses combined, and pressing him forward to the Presidential chair unmindful of their entreaties, and disregarding his own cherished inclinations for retirement and repose—the people will have him—it is "*manifest destiny*," and *resistance is useless*.

Since writing the above, another letter from Gen. Taylor has come to hand, and I presume "there are a few more left of the same sort." It is written to a committee appointed by a meeting of citizens of Montgomery, Alabama, without distinction of party, nominating him for the Presidency. Here is what he says, and it is submitted without comment—it speaks for itself, and all comment would be idle and useless:

"BATON ROUGE, LA., January 23, 1848.

"GENTLEMEN: Your complimentary communication of the 10th instant, enclosing to me a copy of the preamble and resolutions adopted on the 8th instant, by a public meeting of my fellow citizens, without distinction of party, in Montgomery, Alabama, has been received.

"For the high honor which they have been pleased to confer upon me by thus nominating me for the Presidency of the United States, and for the very kind language in which they have seen fit to notice my past life and services, I beg you as their representatives to accept my profound acknowledgments; and to assure my fellow citizens who composed this meeting, that I shall offer no active opposition to the use of my name in connexion with this responsible office, as long as they continue to USE IT THUS INDEPENDENT OF PARTY DISTINCTIONS.

"I am, gentlemen, with high respect, your obedient servant,

"Z. TAYLOR."

It may be well, however, to inquire what course the General will pursue, if the National Convention *should use* his name, *not* independent of party distinctions; and whether the National Convention to be held in Philadelphia in June next is expected to be a *Whig party convention* exclusively, independent of party distinctions; and if so, and he should be nominated as the *Whig* candidate, whether he could feel himself at liberty to accept it, with this pledge, and others of a similar nature, to the no-party meetings of the country. I certainly should think he could not accept it consistently with the above letter.

I have just seen my organ, as the Taylor men call it—Heaven save us—the Richmond Enquirer, which, in its *usual accommodating and liberal spirit*, has grouped together the many hard “flings” of the “Lynchburg Patriot,” the “Lynchburg Virginian,” the “Richmond Republican,” and a “Delegate from Albemarle” levelled at me, in which I am represented as the “genius of political discord,” the “hero of political frays,” as “dictator,” as “the rashest and most imprudent man in Virginia,” as “stubborn and stiff-necked,” and other such gentle, courteous, and conciliatory terms, accompanied, it is true, with many honeyed phrases, such as “with a strong and discriminating mind,” “high powers as a debater,” “great firmness of purpose,” “powerful in argument, and vehement in declamation,” which only serves to embarrass me, as I am in doubt, as to which I am most indifferent, or which I should most appreciate, their censure or their praise; I feel no unkindness towards either “Tray,” “Blanche,” or “Sweetheart;” their excuse is to be found in the *lack* of the very qualities they ascribe to me, to wit, “strong and discriminating minds,” and “great firmness of purpose;” if they had been blessed with either one or the other, or both of these essential requisites, of men fit to lead in political warfare, *we* should not now occupy our relative positions on the questions at issue; they have neither had the discrimination to perceive the true position of General Taylor, nor the firmness of purpose to adhere to their own long cherished principles, but like many others, they were each anxious to be the “Vicar of Bray;” and now that they find that their no-party candidate is effectually laid on the shelf by the great Whig party of the nation, and that the politicians are overthrown by the people, *in their agony*, for having “bent the knee to Baal,” when “thrift” cannot “follow fawning,” poor souls, they take it *all* out upon me; well, rail on, gentlemen, my love of discord will not harm you; I shall quarrel with neither of you; I am in no manner indebted to either of you for what I am; I do not fear that you can rob me of what I have, little as it is; but when you learn the sentiment of the Whig party, I say *Whig party*, you will then perhaps begin to think you are not the great Sanhedrims of the party, State or national. It is very strange that a paper that does so much mischief should be written for, and its circulation courted by the Whigs in almost every part of the United States that it has reached; and that, while thousands have been subscribed for and sent off, the demand for it yet continues; and it is impossible for me to furnish the demand on me for its circulation, and as much in Virginia as elsewhere. Now, those who desire its circulation so extensively must either be greatly mistaken in its results, or these controllers of public opinion, and of my personal rights, have not “discriminated” wisely. Time will show. If their candidate is nominated, I will give it up; if mine is nominated, I will forgive them, not only for their abuse of me, but for their want of discernment and firmness of purpose, especially if they will excuse me for the want of dignity in taking this notice of what they have said.

But, in good earnest, what have I done to incur the censure of the Whig press in such unmeasured terms? Why, I have chosen to prefer the *favorite candidate* of the Whig party of the United States, to the favorite candidate of an



almost self-constituted convention of Virginia. I have chosen to enter the lists almost single-handed and alone, (for those of the Clay party in Virginia have not chosen to "afford me aid and comfort," except by *private* letters,) against the most fearful odds; and to use my best exertions to secure the nomination of Mr. Clay, as *they* have, used *their best exertions* to secure that of General Taylor. Are my rights not equal to theirs? Am I bound to surrender my judgment to their dictation? What claims to consistency can they set up for denouncing me for my support of Mr. Clay, and of Mr. Clay's principles, which they so zealously advocated four years ago? Has Mr. Clay changed? Have I changed? Or have they changed? And if they have changed, where is to be found the obligation upon men to change with them! If to think for myself is an offence, I shall offend perpetually; if to say what I think be a crime, I shall prove the worst of criminals; especially when I see principles dearly cherished and long advocated sacrificed to "*expediency*," that would have been scouted by the party in its better days; and if it is thought to be an easier task to turn the war upon me than to defend General Taylor's position, let the war be carried on, as long and as hard as the boldest of them dare to wage it; I shall be there all the time, unawed and ready for the defence of my principles and myself. How much better it would have become them to show my errors, to defend the position their candidate had assumed, to prove him a thorough Whig, worthy of Whig confidence and support, than to turn the question into one of personal abuse of me. It is a surrender of the question, and must prove so with all intelligent and reflecting men.

JNO. M. BOTTS.

WASHINGTON, *March 30*, 1848.

## POSTSCRIPT.

While correcting the proof sheet of the above, I have received a paper called the "Virginia Patriot," just started in Lynchburg, by two very respectable and tolerably intelligent gentlemen, but somewhat *raw* in their vocation, and *Neophytes* in their position; if they had been veteran politicians, of extended fame and reputation, perfect schoolmasters in their new trade, they could not have made a more labored effort to disparage my "usefulness," and taken greater license in scolding and "*whipping in*," than they have done to shear "*Sampson of his strength*," notwithstanding "they have no fear that his late pronouncement will have any very serious effect upon the people of Virginia or the National Convention." As to their abuse, which might have been tempered with better manners for new beginners, I am as indifferent as if it had neither been written nor published, for I hope to outlive the "*censure and rebuke*" of these most learned judges, matchless in all the properties of the goose—*quill*, *I mean*. I hope to eat as hearty, sleep as sound, and feel as tranquil, as if their wrath had never been disturbed by my pronunciamientos, in which, "*as they can do no harm*," I might be permitted to indulge an idle hour, for pastime and recreation, without having it laid on quite so thick by these renowned champions of "*No-partyism*." I do not belong to their party. Let me tell them again, I belong to the WHIG party, and not to the "OBSOLETE PRINCIPLE PARTY;" and they have no right to scold at me for not joining them. But this is not what I began to write about. That paper makes a statement that will mislead its readers, if it is not corrected. It says: "Virginia has already acted, and she cannot stultify herself by unsaying what she has emphatically declared—that



Gen. Taylor is her choice AS A CANDIDATE for the Presidency." This would make the action of the convention more enduring and obligatory than a law; for an unwise law *may be repealed*, and she stultifies herself with any nonsensical notion, as to keep it on her statute book when she knows it to be untrue and unwise. But Virginia has done no such thing, and these gentlemen voted in convention (if that is their impression) for what *they did not understand*, and they are writing now about what they *know nothing of*. It is the very essence of my complaint, that the convention declared what no one man, on his individual responsibility, will endorse—that "General Taylor *was the choice of the Whigs of Virginia for the Presidency of the United States*," and not their choice *as a candidate*; and yet they themselves italicise the word, thus drawing the distinction between choice as a *candidate* and choice *as President*; and the resolution expresses *precisely* what, upon full deliberation, it was *intended* the convention should *be made* to declare. It was intended, and written, that it might exert its influence, not only on the delegation appointed, but upon other States that had to appoint their delegates, and upon the National Convention itself; and I avail myself of the authority of the Virginia Patriot to show that *they*, both *members* of the convention, and one a Legislative member, did not know what they were doing, and that the convention did not understand what *they* were required to do, and that it did misrepresent the sentiment of the Whig party of the State, and that the people should correct it, in their primary assemblies in all the month of May, after the elections are over, and they will allow themselves to be stultified if they don't do it.

As there is no Clay paper accessible for the publication of whatever may show the *changing* sentiment of the country in favor of Mr. Clay, I attach the following editorial from the "American Whig" of March 25th, published in "GRIFFIN," Georgia, A TAYLOR PAPER, with Gen. Taylor's name still flying at its mast head. How can the Whigs of Virginia be enlightened when they look to the papers published in their own State, and they *all*, with some three or four exceptions in the interior, publish every thing on one side and nothing on the other. Common fairness to a common cause would require equal justice to all.

JNO. M. BOTTS.

THE NEXT PRESIDENCY.—Judging from the signs of the times, and the feeling among the people, which is daily being exhibited, we begin to believe strongly that Mr. Clay and Mr. Polk will run their race over again this fall for the Presidency. The Democratic Convention for nomination assembles at Baltimore on the fourth Monday in May, and as a matter of course cannot know then what the Whigs will do; but will have to select from among their prominent men one that, in their opinion, will give the most general satisfaction to the party; and the fear that throwing Mr. Polk aside, and selecting another, will give strong evidence to their opponents that they are not satisfied with his administration, together with the courtesy due Mr. Polk of a tender of a second nomination, will have great weight in securing for him many votes in the Convention, and we think that no one will doubt that, if a nomination be tendered him, it will be readily accepted.

Should this be the case, if Mr. Polk is renominated by his party, there are many influences existing in the minds of Whigs that will prompt them to put Mr. Clay against him again. Many Whigs view the result of the last election as not a full and fair expression of the will of the American people. Many influences were brought to bear in that contest that cannot be used again, and in justice ought not to have had any weight then; but as they had their weight, and probably caused a different result from what would have taken place under other circumstances, they are unwilling to take the result of that election as conclusive evidence of the public will on all the issues then before the country.

Many Whigs, and not a few Democrats, we are aware, have declared for General Taylor; out, in nine cases out of ten, the Whigs that have so declared did so under the belief that Mr. Clay would not consent to run again, and many of the Democrats were influenced by a belief that General Taylor was of their party, as is shown by the letter of the honorable Henry A.

Muhlenberg, which we publish to-day, and we may reasonably expect that, like him, so soon as they are convinced that they are in error, they will be retract and vote their own party ticket.

In view of these facts, we are not prepared to conclude that Mr. Clay is not the stronger man of the two. We know that the name of Clay creates more enthusiasm in the minds of Whigs than any other name that can be mentioned, and we doubt not that every man who owns the name of Whig will accord to him a hearty support. We have, in order to satisfy ourselves with regard to the feelings of the Whigs in this section, on the subject of the next Presidency, as between General Taylor and Mr. Clay, made it our business to make a personal inquiry of every Whig with whom we have conversed on the subject. We commenced this inquiry more than three months ago, and have continued it up to the present time; and we must acknowledge that the result of the inquiries we have made convinces us that nineteen out of every twenty of the Whigs are for Mr. Clay as their first choice, and nearly all who are for General Taylor take him because they believe him the more available. Different feelings may exist in other sections, but if the Whig feeling in this part of Georgia is a fair exponent of the general Whig feeling of the whole Union, Mr. Clay ought to be the candidate.

We know, too, that several States have declared for Gen. Taylor, either through their Legislatures or Conventions, but these States are confined to the South and Southwest, and all of which voted for Mr. Polk at the last election, and will probably vote for the Democratic candidate at the next. Those States that voted for Mr. Clay, and may be relied on to vote for the Whig candidate, be he whom he may, have not yet expressed their preference. These, together with New York and Pennsylvania, ought to choose the candidate, because they have the power to elect, and without them no man can be elected; and, from what we can learn from the most reliable sources, a large majority of the Whigs of those States prefer Mr. Clay. That the main Whig strength of the Union prefers Mr. Clay, we are now bound to admit; and if so, the choice of the Whig strength ought to decide the question. If the Whigs desire to succeed, they ought to select that candidate who can most certainly command the vote of the most and largest States; and if this be done we are persuaded Mr. Clay will be the nominee.















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